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EXHORTATION

TO THE REVEREND

Mr. *THOMAS TOWLE*,

AT HIS

ORDINATION,

MARCH 24, 1747-8.

At Rope-maker's Alley, London.

The Substance of which was also delivered
before the Publication,

TO THE

Rev. Mr. *MOSES GREGSON*,

AT HIS

ORDINATION

APRIL 20, 1748.

At Rowel in Northamptonshire.

By *JOHN GURSE*, D. D.

The Second EDITION publish'd at Request,

MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY
UNITARIAN COLLECTION



THE EXHORTATION.

THE Part appointed to me, in the solemn Transactions of this Day, is to remind you, my dear Brother and Fellow-Labourer in the Gospel, of the important Business, Obligations and Encouragements, that belong to the Ministry, which you have received of the Lord Jesus ; and in his Name to enforce them, in Hope that the blessed Spirit will impress them, like indelible Characters, upon your Heart. In attempting this, I much rather chuse to entreat you as a Brother, whom I affectionately love in the Truth, than to assume an Air (had I any Pretences to it) of commanding you as a Father. And were I to give any Charge in my own Name, it should be only *this*, (which is indeed no other, than what the Lord himself has given you,) that you regard whatever I have to say to you, only so far as it agrees with his Mind and Will in his Word ; and that you submit to it only upon his Authority, which is absolute and uncontroulable, whilst I have none, but what consists in asserting *his*. *Call no Man Master upon Earth ; for one is your Master, even Christ.* (Matt. xxiii. 9, 10.)

When you reflect on what has been done, in separating you to the Pastoral Office in this Church of Christ, according to the Rules of his Word, you may think you hear him saying to you, as he did to

his Disciples after he had washed their Feet, *Know you what I have done to you?* (John xiii. 12.) He has put a high Honour upon you; has committed an awful and important Trust to you; has laid you under special Obligations, attended with gracious Promises of Assistance; and has brought you into a Sphere of eminent Service, which you must give an Account of another Day. And as I must likewise be called to an Account for this, as well as all my other Ministrations, you, Dear Brother, will excuse the Freedom, which Faithfulness obliges me to use in the serious Exhortation, I am now to give you, and which I would direct as much to myself, as to you: For though, I trust, we in some Measure know, desire, and are prepared, by the Grace of God, to do, the Things that please him; yet, as we need to have them further impressed upon our Consciences, and we may hope, on such a solemn Occasion, for his Blessing upon the humble Attempt, you will spare me a few Words, and *that* without admitting of a Jealousy, as though I suspected any Ill concerning you, than which I assure you, Sir, nothing can be farther from my Thoughts: And it gives me no small Pleasure to observe, that in the Sentiments, and holy Purposes, by Divine Grace, which you have nobly professed before many Witnesses, there is such an intire Harmony with the Design of this Address, in which I would add my Testimony to your's, and do all that in me lies to subserve the Establishment of every good Imagination of the Thoughts of your Heart; and, in Order thereunto, shall suggest nothing, but what I believe to be, either expressly, or by just Consequence, contained in the *inspired Oracles*, the only Rule of Faith and Practice. May God enable me to keep within those sacred Bounds, and then print what may be offered upon your Heart and Mine, and upon the Hearts of all our attending Reverend Brethren and Fathers,

Fathers, if I may be allowed to be *constructively* a Monitor also to them!

I cannot fix on a properer Passage of Scripture for the Basis of this brotherly Exhortation, than that, with which you concluded your excellent Confession, 1 Tim. iv. 16.*

Take heed unto thyself, and unto thy Doctrine; continue in them: For in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

In these Words we have an apostolic Charge of Paul the aged to young Timothy, which, by Virtue of its Divine Authority, is of equal Obligation from my Mouth to you. Let me therefore, taking Rise from hence, recommend the *Duties* enjoined; and the *Arguments* to enforce them, as the Lord shall enable me. I would begin with,

First, The Duties enjoined; and they are *two*, with *Perseverance* in them to the End. *Take Heed to thyself, and to thy Doctrine; continue in them.* Let Experience and Practice lead the Way to Doctrine and Counsel, that like a good Man, and a Scribe well instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven, you may bring forth out of the Treasure of your Heart, good Things, both new and old. (Matt. xii. 35, and xiii. 52.) First teach *yourself*, and then teach others, as one desirous that you and they may be all taught of God. See to it, first, that all Things be right in your own Soul; and then use your utmost Endeavours, to give right Instruction to others, as ever you would expect the Divine Presence and Blessing, to make your Labours pleasant and profitable to yourself and them. Begin at Home; and then carry your Concern and Care abroad, through all your holy Ministrations; and that not only when you first set out in the Work of the Lord, or by Fits and Starts afterwards, in a good Mood, and in a smooth Path; but by an assiduous persevering Diligence, amidst

* Mr. Towle closed the Confession of his Faith with this Text.

all Difficulties, Opposition and Discouragements, through the whole Course of your Life.

I. Take Heed *to thyself*. Attend carefully (ἐπεχε) to the Things that concern *yourself*, with respect to *your own State before GOD*; *the Frame and Temper of your Heart*; *your Furniture for the Ministry*; and *the whole Compass of your Behaviour*, relating to GOD, *yourself*, and *others*.

1. Take Heed to yourself, with respect to *your own State before GOD*.

This is a fundamental Charge, which is first of all, and continuedly to be taken Care of, as I trust it already has been. If *your own Soul* is lost, all is lost to you for ever; and without a conscientious Care about its eternal Welfare you cannot be *a good Minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the Words of Faith, and of good Doctrine*, (1 Tim. iv. 6.) For he will have little Concern for the Souls of *others*, who is careless about his *own*; he will be little qualified to lead them into the Way of Salvation by Jesus Christ, who is practically a Stranger to it himself; and will have little Heart to deal out the Mysteries of GOD to others, who has no good Hope of a personal Interest in them to the profiting of his own Soul: Nor can he warrantably and comfortably expect that GOD should be with him, to own and succeed him in his Work, while his own Heart is not with GOD in it. See to it then, my beloved Brother, that you *yourself* be, and, through the witnessing of the Spirit with your Spirit, know yourself to be in Christ; that you are in a State of Favour with GOD, through Faith in the great Redeemer, and shall not come into Condemnation; that a Work of Heart-changing Grace is wrought in your own Soul; that you are passed from Death to Life; and that, under the Influence of the Holy Spirit, you have given up your whole Self to the Lord, without Reserve, and are experimentally acquainted with the efficacious Powers

Powers of vital Religion, and Godliness. *Give Diligence to make your own Calling and Election sure,* that this may be a clear and settled Point between GOD and you, *to the full Assurance of Hope to the End.* (2 Pet. i. 10. and Heb. vi. 11.)

2. Take Heed to yourself, with respect to *the Frame and Temper of your Heart.*

See that this be such as becomes the Christian, and the Minister of Jesus Christ; that you maintain a holy Reverence of the great GOD, and an awful Sense of his infinite Majesty, Omniscience and Holiness, and of your being accountable to him, to make you humble, watchful and faithful, wheresoever you are, or whatever you do; and that you keep up lively Thoughts of the Riches of his Grace in Christ, to engage your Heart to him, to sweeten all the Labours and Sufferings, you may be called to, for his Name's Sake, and to encourage and Support you under them. Be thankful for what you have received, and humbly depending for what you further need: Live by Faith on the Son of GOD, who loved you, and gave himself for you; live upon him for Wisdom, Righteousness and Strength, for all Assistance, Acceptance and Success: Commit yourself, your Way, your Work, and your Reward to him, and leave them all in his Hand: Look to the blessed Spirit, to enable you to carry on a daily Course of holy Communion with GOD in Christ, to give your Soul a spiritual and heavenly Turn; to regulate and invigorate your Principles and your Views; to lead you into all Truth; to endear Christ, his Gospel, and his Cause, to your own Soul; to possess you with a deep and affecting Sense of their Excellence and Importance; and to inspire you with Christian-Fortitude, and fervent Zeal for the Glory of GOD, and with a most ardent and compassionate Love to perishing Souls.

Be concerned, my Reverend Brother, that these Principles and Views may govern you, to the Extinction of all worldly-Mindedness and Pusillanimous Fears, of Vain-glory and Self-applause, and of intemperate Heats and uncharitable Censures, and all *the Wrath of Man, which works not the Righteousness of GOD*; that your Spirit may not be swayed by any earthly Bias, nor enfeebled by Cowardice, nor sowed with Prejudices, Pride and Envy, or with Bitterness, Fury and Malice against any, no, not against those that oppose the glorious Peculiarities of the Gospel: But, while you have a holy Detestation of their *dangerous Errors*, labour to maintain a benevolent Frame of Spirit toward their *Persons*, and to be yourself a shining *Example of Believers, in Charity, in Spirit, in Faith and Purity*, as the Apostle directs. *1 Tim. iv. 12.*

Let your Zeal for Truth and Holiness, and against Error and Sin, be proportioned to the *Importance of Things*, that though there ought to be no Indifference in your Mind to any Doctrines or Practices, which you believe to be of God; yet those that are *most vital*, and influential to his Glory, and the Interest of real Religion, may command the *warmest Fervour* of your Soul about them. But as to Things of *less Consequence*, cultivate all possible Charity, Forbearance and Peace, in the Temper of your Spirit, toward them that differ from you; and look upon, and love all those, as Brethren, who hold the Head, and bear his Image. In all this let *Integrity and Uprightness preserve you*, that you may ever appear to be what you really are, and may *approve the Things that are excellent, and be sincere and without Offence, till the Day of Christ.* (Phil. i. 10.)

3. Take Heed to yourself, with respect to your *Furniture for the Ministry.*

The Things that have been spoken of, are indeed essential Parts of this Furniture; but that which I
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now further aim at, relates to what are usually called *ministerial Abilities*, or *spiritual Gifts*; and I heartily rejoice that God has honoured you with so many of these: But I beseech you, dear Brother, to recollect, that these are not so far advanced, as to need no further Cultivation and Improvement: Whatever you have already attained, there is abundant Room, and Occasion, to be pressing still forwards; and if your present ministerial Talents be not improved to an *Increase* for your Master's Use, they will wither and decline; and there is great Danger of their being taken from you: *Be not therefore high minded; but fear.*

There needs great *Wisdom* and *Prudence*, as well as an *honest Heart*, to manage the Cause of Christ to Advantage, that it may not suffer through Ignorance, on one Hand, or Indiscretions, on the other, which either the Fear of Men, or an Affectation of pleasing them, or the Foibles of an easy natural Temper, or an unyielding Stiffness, and rash Zeal, might betray you into. Labour therefore to increase your Stock of useful Knowledge, and of Judgment to husband and apply it, on all Occasions, in the best Manner, that, like a wise and faithful Steward, you may know how to conduct the Affairs, distribute the Provisions, and maintain the Charter, Obligations and Privileges of the Household of Faith. In order hereunto give *Attendance to Reading, to Exhortation, to Doctrine: Meditate on these Things; give yourself wholly to them, that your profiting may appear to all.* (1 Tim. iv. 13, 14.)

Let the Bible be your chief Study, with an Eye to the Father of Lights, to the great Prophet of the Church, and to the Spirit of Truth, that you may be thoroughly enlightened and established in the *Divine Authority, and genuine Sense of the holy Scriptures*: Study the *Evidences* of this blessed Revelation, that you may be more

and more Master of the Arguments for, and Objections against it; and may be capable of supporting it against the numerous Cavils, which the Infidels of this, and former Ages, have artfully and laboriously raised in Opposition to it: And *dig deep* into the Mines of evangelical Truth, the Riches of which are inexhaustible, that you may know, prize and keep them, as the choicest Treasure, and may be enabled to draw them out in great Abundance, and to defend them against the various Attacks and Encroachments of those, that would corrupt the Simplicity of the Gospel, and rob us of its peculiar and distinguishing Glories.

Daily read the Scriptures in the *original Languages*; and labour after a familiar Acquaintance with the very *Words and Phrases*, by which the Holy Ghost teaches spiritual Things, and impresses them upon the Conscience, as the best Oratory of the Pulpit; and after a modest Presence of Mind, and decent Readiness of Expression, that you may be *apt to teach*. Let your critical Learning, and the Chief of all your other Reading and Studies, subserve these Views, and tend toward them; as your *cardinal Point*, that you may be *thoroughly furnished unto all good Works*: And *continue in these Things* all your Days. (2 Tim. iii. 14, 17.)

4. Take Heed to yourself, with respect to the *whole Compass of your Behaviour*, relating to GOD, yourself, and others.

As to what relates to GOD, besides the Things that have been suggested about the Frame and Temper of your Heart towards him, let Religion be the *Business*, and the holy Law of God the *Rule* of your Life. Make Conscience of fulfilling every Duty he enjoins, and of departing from every Thing he forbids; and be much in earnest and importunate Prayer to God through Jesus Christ, as Mediator, by
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the Assistance of his Spirit. Let this be your chosen and daily Work in your Retirements, and in the Family *, at the Head of which Providence has placed you ; and as Opportunities offer, and Occasions require, in the Church of Christ, and among your Christian Friends. *In every Thing by Prayer and Supplication, with Thanksgiving, let your Requests be made known to GOD.* (Phil. iv. 6.) Wrestle with him in your Prayers, for yourself and others ; for the Anointings of his Spirit, and for his Blessing upon your own, and all your Brethren's Ministrations ; and stand up for Purity of Doctrine, Worship and Discipline, and for the Glory of all the Divine Perfections, Counsels and Government, against Corruptions and Profaneness of every Kind.

Labour likewise, under Divine Influence, after a becoming *Self-Government*, in a due Regulation of all your Passions and Appetites, and particularly in Temperance, Chastity, and Sobriety of Mind and Manners, that *you may know how to possess your Vessel in Sanctification and Honour. Flee also youthful Lusts ; and follow Righteousness, Faith, Charity, Peace, with them that call on the Lord with a pure Heart,* (1 Thess. iv. 4. and 2 Tim. ii. 22.)

In all your Behaviour towards *others*, seek Wisdom and Grace from Heaven to enable you to recommend the good Ways of the Lord, by all holy Conversation and Godliness, in every Relation of Life, civil and religious, in which you now do, or hereafter may stand : Take all possible Care to *live* the Doctrines you preach, that you may be among those, that are *the Salt of the Earth*, and *the Light of the World* ; and that whatever Company you keep, or come into, they may be, one Way or other, the better for you : *Provide Things honest,* (Καλα) honourable and praise worthy, *in the Sight of all Men ;*

* Mr. Towle is a married Man, and Master of a Family.

and if it be possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all Men. (Rom. xii. 17, 18.) Labour after this by *all lawful Methods*, not to the sacrificing of Holiness and Truth, and especially important Truth; but to the maintaining of *both*, in the most amicable Manner, that *speaking the Truth in Love*, you may grow up in all Things into him, which is the Head, even Christ; (Eph. iv. 15.) and that you may follow Peace with all Men, and Holiness, without which no Man shall see the Lord. (Heb. xii. 14.)

In your Converses with the *Enemies* of Christ, and of his Truths and Ways, endeavour to convince them by Scripture and sound Reason, and to win upon them with all the Gentleness and Kindness, that may consist with your being *valiant for the Truth*, and contending earnestly for the Faith, which was once delivered to the Saints. (Jude ver. 3.) Strive for the Faith of the Gospel, and strive zealously for it, in this degenerate and sceptical Age: But see that it be only by *Gospel-Methods*, that while you are pleading for it, the Manner of your Plea may not disgrace it. Take Heed of mean Compliances with its Opposers, on one Hand; and of carrying your own unhallowed Fire to God's Altar, on the other; but in Meekness instruct those that oppose themselves, if GOD peradventure will give them Repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth, &c. (2 Tim. ii. 25, 26.)

In conversing with your Brethren and Fellow-Christians, do what in you lies, to strengthen their Hands in every good Way and Work, and to promote a harmonious Spirit of cordial Friendship among them, that *whereunto* they and you have already attained, ye may walk by the same Rule, and mind the same Things; and if in any Thing they be otherwise minded, and you cannot satisfy them in a brotherly Way, leave them to GOD to reveal it to them, in Confidence, that if they do indeed belong to him, and it be a Matter of much Consequence, he

he will, in his Time and Way, convince them of it, as the Apostle intimates, *Phil. iii. 15, 16.*

And in your Behaviour toward the *Church*, over which the Holy Ghost has made you Overseer, be careful to know the State of the Flock, in all the Variety of their spiritual Concerns, and to maintain their Right of *Suffrage*, together with your own Right of *Presidence*, which a Spirit of Meekness and Love. Never lord it over GOD's Heritage; but be contented with the Exercise of such Powers to their Edification, as belong to a *Minister of Christ*, and *Steward of the Mysteries of GOD*, that has no Dominion over their Faith; but is to be a *Helper of their Joy.* (2 Cor. i. 24.) In all your *Management* of Church-affairs, and *Carriage* towards its Members, you are to behave with Prudence and Temper, with Caution and Modesty, with Fidelity and Tenderness, with Courage and Condescension, suitable to every Occurrence, that no Disorders may be countenanced, and no tender Consciences grieved; and that nothing may break in upon its Purity, Edification, Love and Peace. In dispensing the *visible Seals* of the Covenant, you should proceed according to the Rule and Warrant, with relation to Believers and their Seed, which Christ has given you in his Word. And in *visiting* Church-Members, and others of your Congregation, especially when they labour under Sicknes, or any other Affliction, in Soul or Body, it behoves you to do all that may be, to promote their spiritual Welfare; and it is your incumbent Duty to take special Care of the Children of the Covenant, and of the rising Generation, that they be trained up in the Way of the Lord, in the Days of their Youth.

With respect to all these, and such like Things, take Heed, Brother, to yourself, to your own Spirit, Words and Ways, giving no Offence in any Thing, that the Ministry be not blamed: But in all Things
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approve yourself, as a Minister of GOD, in much Patience, in Afflictions, in Necessities, in Distresses; by Pureness, by Knowledge, by Long-suffering, by Kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by Love unfeigned, by the Word of Truth, by the Power of GOD, by the Armour of Righteousness on the right Hand and on the left, by Honour and Dishonour, by evil Report and good Report, and tho' accounted by some as a Deceiver, yet true. (2 Cor. vi. 3,—8.) Continue, Brother, a steady Course, by heavenly Aid, in all these Things relating to yourself, that no Man may despise your Youth. (1 Tim. iv. 12.) And then

II. Take Heed to your Doctrine.

Never dare to preach any Thing to others, farther than you believe yourself, upon the best Examination that God enables you to make; and take Care to explain, confirm, defend and improve, what you offer, as Occasions require, like a good Steward of the manifold Grace of God; speaking as becomes the Oracles of GOD, and ministring as of the Ability which GOD gives, that he in all Things may be glorified through Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. iv. 10, 11.) In order hereunto, see that the Doctrine you preach be clear and scriptural; important and seasonable; evangelical and practical.

1. Take Heed that your Doctrine be clear and scriptural.

Beg of God to make you a complete Master of your Subject, that you may understand what you say, and whereof you affirm; and endeavour to set your Ideas in an easy and familiar, plain and obvious Light, before the Minds of your Hearers. Do not seek to hide your own Sentiments under ambiguous Terms; but wherever you preach, be uniformly frank and open in declaring them, especially in Cases of Importance, that every one may know your real Meaning; and endeavour to bring them down to the lowest Capacities in the Assembly, as
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far as the Nature of things will bear. Never entertain your Auditory with *cunningly devised Fables*, or Philosophical Harangues, or dry Systems of meer Morality, or doubtful Disputations; but *feed them with Knowledge and Understanding*, like a Pastor according to GOD's own Heart. (Jer. iii. 15.)

Above all Things else, be sure that your Preaching be *scriptural*, speaking the Things which become sound Doctrine, and holding fast the faithful Word, as you have been taught, that you may be able, by sound Doctrine, both to exhort, and to convince the Gain-sayers. (Tit. ii. 1. and i. 9.)

Teach no other Doctrine than that, which you have received from Christ and his Apostles, and other inspirited Writers; but keep close to the Rule of Faith in the Word of God, (as I rejoice to find is your determinate Design) and to our Lord's Commission, who has said, *Teach to observe all Things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even to the End of the World.* (Matt. xxviii. 20.) Compare spiritual Things with spiritual, and thoroughly weigh every Context, that you may give the true and genuine Sense of Scripture: And take Heed of *walking in Craftiness, or handling the Word of GOD deceitfully; but by Manifestation of the Truth, commend yourself to every Man's Conscience in the Sight of GOD.* (2 Cor. iv. 2.) May it be the holy Ambition of your Soul, so to preach, as that GOD shall *always cause you to triumph in Christ, and make manifest the Savour of his Knowledge by you in every Place*, where you stately, or occasionally minister! And take Heed of being as *many, which corrupt the Word of GOD; but as of Sincerity, but as of GOD, in the Sight of GOD, speak thou, Brother, in Christ.* (2 Cor. ii. 14, 17.) Let *Uncorruptness, Gravity, and Sincerity, and sound Speech, which cannot be condemned*, run through your Doctrine, as well as a *Pattern of good Works* run through your

your Life, *that he who is of the contrary Part, may be ashamed, having no evil Thing to say of you.* (Tit. ii. 7, 8.)

Guard against *all Extremes*, that either intrench upon the Doctrines of *Grace*, or upon any of the *Divine Perfections*; or that lead to *Self-sufficiency*, or to *Licentiousness*. Study how you may, in the best Manner, solve Difficulties, and reconcile *seeming Contradictions*, in the Word of GOD, without starting such as are needless, and unprofitable to be discussed, and without managing them with an Air of Controversy; and never aim at being *wise above what is written*. Do not make Mysteries, where the Scripture has made none; nor pretend to *explain* what the Scripture has left as Mysteries, which would soon plunge you out of your Depth; but publish them to be believed, upon *Divine Authority*, just as GOD has left them, though you cannot account for their *Modes*, nor tell *how those Things can be*. Hence,

2. Take Heed that your Doctrine be *important and seasonable*.

There is indeed no Part of Divine Revelation, that is not one Way or other useful: For *all Scripture is given by Inspiration of GOD, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness; that the Man of GOD may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good Works.* (2Tim. iii. 16, 17.) But some of its sacred Truths are more profitable than others; and some are of such a critical Nature, as not to make it needful for common Hearers to be puzzled with them; because they cannot be easily brought within the Compass of their Thoughts; nor do they affect their *personal Religion*, Edification and Salvation: But nothing should be *kept back, that may be profitable to them*; nor should you *shun to declare any Part of the Counsel of GOD*, as the great Apostle did not; (*Acts xx. 20, 27.*)

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every *needful* Doctrine and Duty, *personal* and *relative*, should take their Turns in your Ministry, whether the People will hear, or forbear: And yet even among *profitable* Truths, some are of *more* Use and Importance, than others, as the Glory of GOD, and the Conversion, Edification, Serviceableness to the Church and the World, and the eternal Happiness of the Auditory, are more *nearly* concerned in them; and, for that Reason, they ought to be most insisted on, *that every one may have his Portion*, especially of such Sort of *Meat*, in due Season. (Luke xii. 42.)

Let therefore *solid* and *substantial* Truths and Duties be your chief Themes of Discourse, and *that* as they may be best suited to the different States and Conditions of *Saints* and *Sinners*. *Study to shew yourself approved to GOD, a Workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.* (2 Tim. ii. 15.) Exercise all your Talents, to separate between the *precious* and the *vile*; and to let them know what GOD's Word says to them respectively, that *ignorant* Souls may be instructed; that *hardned* obstinate Sinners may be awakened and convinced; and that *convinced* and *relenting* Sinners may be directed and encouraged; that *scrupulous, tender and troubled* Consciences may be relieved; that the *Erroneous* may be reduced to the Knowledge and Love of the Truth, as it is in Jesus, and *loose Professors* may be warned, and stirred up to their Duty; that *weak Believers* may be strengthened; that *doubting* Believers may be satisfied; that *disconsolate* Believers may be comforted; that *backsliding* Believers may be reclaimed, and *strong* Believers may be yet more and more confirmed in Faith, Comfort and Holiness, to compleat Salvation; that *Christ's Lambs and Sheep* may be fed; that *Babes in Christ* may have

their *Milk*, and *Men of full Age*, who, by reason of Use, have their *Spiritual Senses exercised to discern both Good and Evil*, may have their *strong Meat*; and that such *Doctrines and Duties, Promises and Threatenings* may be most inculcated, as the *Circumstances* of your People, and the *Corruptions* in Principle and Practice, and the *Opposition* of the Present Day, may render most necessary. Hence,

3. Take Heed that your Doctrine be *evangelical and practical*.

This Sort of Doctrine is indeed of great Importance; and therefore cannot ordinarily be unseasonable; and it is your main Business, as a Minister of *Christ*, to preach *Him, and his Gospel*, which is *the Gospel of the Grace of GOD, the Gospel of Salvation, and the Doctrine according to Godliness*. Preach *Gospel-Truths*, and *Gospel-Duties*: Let the glorious and distinguishing *Peculiarities* of the Gospel Revelation, influence, inforce and govern all your Discourses on *moral Duties*, and shed a Beauty upon them; and whatever your Subject be, let it, one Way or other, turn toward *Christ*, and center in him, who is the Spring and Life, the Alpha and Omega, of the Christian's Hope, Holiness and Happiness. See that the Doctrines you preach be calculated to display *the Glory of GOD in the Face of Jesus Christ*, and lead the Soul to him, that he may be exalted, and the Creature abased before him; and that they be close and searching, suited to inform the Judgment, and strike the Conscience, to convince and persuade, to humble and encourage, to reach Experience, and move upon the Affections, and all the Springs of human Action, that Light and Saviour may be defused thro' all your Ministrations; and that, by the attending Spirit of the

New

New Testament, they may make their Way to the Hearts, and Influence the Lives of your Hearers.

You will easily perceive, Dear Brother, that these Doctrines include among others, which you have made a good Confession of, the Differences there are between the *Covenants* of Works and Grace, and their respective *Heads*, and the various *Dispensations* of the Covenant of Grace: The *Fall* of all Mankind under their *first* Publick-Head, with the *Guiltiness* and *Depravity*, *Impotence* and *Misery*, of their fallen State; and the eternal Counsel of God's Wisdom and Will, about the *Recovery* of a *Remnant* of them, under Christ, the *second* Adam, according to the *Election* of Grace, thro' the *Redemption* that is in him, and by the *effectual Application* of the Holy Spirit, in the Way, and by the Means of God's Appointment, *that no Flesh might Glory in his Presence, but that he who glorieth may glory in the Lord.* The *divine* and *Æconomical* Glories of the *Three* adorable *Persons* in the *Unity* of the Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, are likewise to be supported and displayed in your Ministry. And in Connection with these Doctrines, you are to go on to *propose* Christ to the Acceptance of all Sorts of Sinners, with an Eye to his *almighty Power and sovereign Grace*, to open their Hearts to receive him: You are also to preach the Nature and Necessity of *Regeneration*, and of *Faith* in the Lord Jesus, in his *Person*, as God-Man, and in all his *Offices* of a Prophet, Priest and King, as Mediator; and the Doctrine of *Repentance* toward God, and *new Obedience* in Heart and Life; of *Justification* by the Righteousness of Christ imputed to them that believe; of *Sanctification* by his Spirit; of *Perseverance* in Grace and Holiness, together with all *Christian-Privileges* and *Duties*, that shall issue in

the final Salvation, which is in Christ Jesus with eternal Glory.

And that there may be no Room for any of your unconverted Hearers, to *despair* on one Hand, or to be *slothful and presumptuous* on the other, let them know that a *Door of Hope* is opened in Christ before them; that there is all Salvation in him for the Chief of Sinners; and that none, under the Gospel, are, by its Tenor, excluded, who do not exclude themselves by their own Impenitence and Unbelief; but that if they, through the Hardness of their own Hearts, continue to reject him, and persist in their Iniquities, they will certainly and deservedly *die in their Sins, and the Wrath of GOD will for ever abide upon them.*

Thus, Dear Brother, *Take Heed to yourself, and to your Doctrine*, through *all the Days* of your Ministration in the Kingdom and Patience of Jesus. Let me now add a few Words upon

Secondly, The Arguments to enforce these your Duties: *For in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.* What weighty and animating Considerations are these! May the Lord himself set them Home upon your Heart and mine!

I need not tell you, Sir, that God *alone* is the *Author* of Salvation; and that you can be only *instrumental* in his Hand, and *subservient* to his efficacious Grace, in the Salvation of your *own*, and of *other's* Souls: Nor need I inform you, that how wisely, faithfully, plainly, or pathetically and laboriously soever you are helped to discharge the important Trust committed to you, it is not *FOR*, but *IN doing this*, as our Version well expresses it, that you, or they shall be saved. *Doing this* (τὸ τοιοῦτον) is only the *Way and Means* of God's Appointment, and of your Expectation of this blessed Event;

Event: And whenever it shall be brought to pass, it will not be as a Reward of *Merit*; but of free though promised *Grace*, which is indeed the only, and the surest Reward, that *sinful* unworthy Creatures can have any Hope of: For *therefore it is of Grace, that the Promise might be sure unto all the Seed.* (Rom. iv. 16.) And what greater Encouragement can there be to Faithfulness and Diligence in your Lord's Work, than the Promise which now lies before you? Consider then that

1. In attending to these christian and ministerial Duties, you, by the Grace of God, will subserve *your own Salvation.*

This is a Matter of the highest Consequence to *yourself*, who have a Soul to be saved, or lost for ever, as well as any of your Hearers. And ah! how cutting and agonizing would it be, at the great Day, to see others admitted into the Kingdom of Heaven, by Means of your Ministrations, and yourself shut out! But *I hope better Things of you, Brother, Things that accompany Salvation, though I thus speak.* And yet what Care and Pains, what Fidelity and Diligence, what Watchfulness and Prayer, and what Humility and Self-denial, ought you to be excited to, *lest by any Means, when you have preached to others, you yourself should be a Castaway.* (1 Cor. ix. 27.)

Remember that your being a *Minister*, will not save you. No, your Difficulties, Temptations and Dangers, as a Minister, the Trust committed to you, and the Account you must give to God, are greater than those of others; and therefore more Grace is needful for you, than for them, to carry you through all, and bring you off well at last. But remember also, for your Encouragement, that you serve the best of Masters, *whose Grace is sufficient for you, whose Strength is made perfect*

perfect in your Weakness, and who has promised to be with you: And if you obtain Mercy to be faithful, he will certainly stand by you, will assist and own you, and preserve you from every dangerous Snare; and *when the chief Shepherd shall appear, you shall receive the Crown of Glory, which fades not away.* (1 Pet. v. 4.) Then he, as Judge of all, will say to you, *Well done, good and faithful Servant; enter, Thou, into the Joy of thy Lord.* (Matt. xxv. 23.) The Hopes of this should invigorate you, in the Way: and the Enjoyment of this, will make you a rich and eternal Amends, at the End, for all the Troubles, Labours and Sufferings, you may meet with in the Work of the Lord. Take Heed therefore to yourself and to your Doctrine, *for your own Salvation's Sake.* And consider that

2. In the same Way of Instrumentality, you, by the Blessing of God upon a faithful Discharge of these Duties, will be the Means of *saving them that hear you.*

Their Souls are committed by the Lord Jesus to your ministerial Charge, that you may watch over them, and watch for them, as one that must give an Account to him: And O how dreadful would it be, if any of their Blood should be required at your Hand, for your Unfaithfulness or Neglects! But if you are found true to your Trust, you will deliver your own Soul, whatever becomes of theirs; you will be pure from the Blood of all Men, and, *will be a sweet Savour of Christ to GOD, in them that perish, as well as in them that are saved.* (2 Cor. ii. 15.) Yea, and you may warrantably and comfortably hope for his Blessing on your Labours, to the plucking of many as Brands out of the Fire, and *turning them from Darknes to Light, and from the Power of Satan*
unto

unto GOD, that they may receive Forgiveness of Sins, and Inheritance among them, which are sanctified by Faith in Christ Jesus. (*Acts xxvi. 18.*)

And O what a noble Pleasure is it, to be an Instrument of glorifying GOD, in the Salvation of immortal Souls! If it were but of *one Soul*, that would be well worth studying, preaching, praying and labouring for, all your Days. How much more, if, the *Hand of the Lord being with you*, a great Number should believe and turn to the Lord. (*Acts xi. 21.*) What new Life and Spirit will every Seal of your Ministry give you, while you are toiling under its Difficulties and Discouragements! A Reflection upon this will be like an Angel of GOD strengthening you. And to what rich Account will it turn at last, when you shall see them, together with yourself, at the right Hand of Christ! These will be your *Glory and Joy, and Crown of Rejoicing, in the Presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his Coming.* (*1 Thess. ii. 19, 20.*) For they that be wise shall shine, as the Brightness of the Firmament, and they that turn many to Righteousness, as the Stars for ever and ever. (*Dan. xii. 3.*) Take Heed therefore to yourself, and to your Doctrine; and continue in them, for your People's Sake, that they may be saved in the Day of the Lord Jesus.

For a Conclusion of the whole, Permit me, Dear Brother, to remind you of our Apostle's solemn Words to Timothy; (*2 Tim. iv. 1, 2, 5.*) and to leave them as a sacred Bond, under Divine Authority, upon your Soul: *I charge thee before GOD, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the Quick and the Dead at his Appearing, and his Kingdom: Preach the Word; be instant in Season and out of Season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all Long-Suffering and Doctrine. Watch thou in all Things; endure*

endure Afflictions; do the Work of an evangelical Pastor; make full Proof of thy Ministry. To which I would add another of his Apostolic Injunctions, which equally concerns you: (1 Tim. vi. 11,—16.) Thou, O Man of GOD, flee the ensnaring Enticements of this World; and follow after Righteousness, Godliness, Faith, Love, Patience, Meekness. Fight the good Fight of Faith, lay hold on eternal Life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good Profession before many Witnesses. I give thee Charge in the Sight of GOD, who quickneth all Things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good Confession, that thou keep this Commandment without Spot, unrebukable, until the Appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ; which in his Times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; who only hath Immortality, dwelling in the Light, which no Man can approach unto; whom no Man hath seen, nor can see: To whom be Honour and Power everlasting. Amen.

F I N I S.



